

courtesy in their minds, as the gauntlet had been thrown down to them by the ladies, who said, if you will put the stone work right, we will put in the glass."

Mr. Gower (an architect) was glad to see a practical improvement in the buildings of Bristol generally. It was almost impossible in his perhaps to say so, but as coming from London he might express an opinion. The restoration of the Bathings, the proposed extension of the High Cross, and other matters were his great admiration, and recommended much to the credit of Bristol. With regard to their own building, St. Mary Redcliff, they were going on with confidence, and he hoped it would prove as to those who designed it. The North porch, as a piece of work, especially the carving, leaving the architectural supervision out of the question, was equal to anything now in progress.

The north side of the clerestory of the chancel was nearly finished; in a week or so they would commence the windows on the south side. The architectural ornamentation of the south transept was gratifying to him, apart from professional considerations, because it was the site of the founder's tomb, and one of the most interesting portions of the edifice. There was a beautiful silhouette of the Diagonal and the Perpendicular in the principal window of this transept; the clerestory windows were unique; the gables and the beams were beautiful in design. There were particular reasons why they should get as much done as possible next year, because the Archaeological Institute intended spending to Bristol then. Many people asked what good archaeological societies do in travelling about. One good they did was to make the inhabitants proud of their own buildings. He remembered a small village in Norfolk, where the inhabitants were gathered together, owing to 150 people having come down from London, and they wanted to know what brought them there. They came to the decision that their church must be exceedingly interesting and valuable, and that they ought to take care of it. This was not needed in Bristol. But the advantage in bringing strangers there would be to get many who now know St. Mary Redcliff only from prints, acquainted with it personally; and, perhaps, they might assist in its restoration. St. Mary Redcliff was a monument of piety, an association of poetry, a miracle of art, and wanted no eulogium or effort to induce the people of Bristol to attach importance to it.

The Rev. M. Walsh, Mr. Garrard, Mr. W. P. King, Mr. W. Powell, and others addressed the meeting.

#### ALTERATIONS AT THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

In granting a vote of £4,000, to defray the expense of alterations in the new Houses of Parliament, the Commons, on 2nd inst., had another long conversation or discussion on the house generally and on Mr. Barry particularly, in which Colonel Sibthorp, Mr. Hume, Mr. Osborne, Sir D. Norreys, and other members cordially united in running down the architect, unfortunately, in the present instance, with more show of reason than heretofore. On the acoustical question the Chancellor of the Exchequer remarked, almost in the words of *THE BUILDER* some time ago, that he had found, on inquiry, in the case of churches, for instance, that one church might be admirably adapted for hearing, while in another, built upon precisely the same plan, it was almost impossible to hear at all. It was, he understood, easy to build an apartment in which a person speaking from a given point, as from a tribune, would be heard in all parts of the room; and he believed that in the new house a person speaking from a particular point would be as well heard as he understood counsel were when speaking from the bar of the House of Lords; but he had been informed that it was impossible to build a room in which it could be certainly predicted that the hearing would be equally good in all parts. The committee had felt that they were unable to come to any conclusion without trying experiments upon this subject; and they determined to try the experiment of a boarded roof in the new House of Commons, which hon. gentlemen had seen on Wednesday, and which cost little more than 100*l*. During the sitting on that day several members of the committee endeavoured to ascertain the opinions of members as to whether the hearing was improved or not. He believed that of some twenty or twenty-two gentlemen he had asked, ten were of one opinion and twelve of the other. The Chancellor also stated that the evidence of Dr. Reid, Mr. Scott Russell, and Professors Wheatstone and Faraday had been taken by

the committee, but he did not think the latter had gained much knowledge from their evidence.

Mr. D'Israeli repeated the Christian-like proposal made in one of his books some time ago, to make "an example" of some architect by hanging him in fetters to all designers of bad architecture, and in commenting on which at the time we recommended him to begin with Mr. Barry, as the one most in the way of his fellow architects. Mr. D'Israeli oddly enough went on to say that he would recommend the Government to reflect seriously on the fact that no profession had ever yet succeeded in this country till it had furnished what was called "an example." For instance, you hanged Admiral Byng, and the navy increased in efficiency till we won Trafalgar. The disgrace of Whitelock was followed by the victory of Waterloo. We had decapitated Archbishop Laud, and had therefore secured the responsibility of the bishops. That principle we had never yet applied to architects, and when a member of that profession was called on to execute a very simple task and utterly failed after a large expenditure of public money, it really became the Government to consider the case, and they might rest assured that if once they contemplated the possibility of hanging an architect they would put a stop to such blunders in future!

The discussion was wound up by Mr. Wakley, who declared he thought the temporary roof had caused a great improvement in the hearing, although they had not yet had a fair trial. He recommended that the new house be hung round with flags.

#### COMPETITION IN THE BUILDING TRADE.

COMPETITION in the Building Trade has reached a lamentable height, and I think you will agree with me that something should be done to stop its further progress. Trade is truly in a wretched state; men are at a loss to know how to act for provision for themselves and families, so voracious and cruel is the evil with which they have to contend. For a builder to live and be honest now-a-days is quite a farce; if inclined to be so, the public will not let him. Competition they must have. Cheapness they will catch at, let it prove ever so bitter or dear. To be in the building trade you must scheme, contrive, turn, twist, beat down the merchant who supplies you, buy your goods no matter from whom, whence they come, or how obtained; the workmen in your employ must be ground down to the last extremity, heedless of the families they have to support; in fact, there must be no scruples of conscience or tender-heartedness, provided you can find the means to do work at a lower rate than your neighbour, and thereby satisfy a deluded public by it being said you are a cheap man. There are many in the trade who coolly (although they know not the trade, either practically or theoretically) guess the amount of a contract from looking at the drawings. Others will cube the contents of a building (a most pernicious practice); others will form an idea from works they have executed before; while the few, like good craftsmen, will go minutely into detail in order to attain their end. A tinker or a tailor, a street-orderly or a dustman, may now compete, such facilities are given by a discerning and an enlightened public to encourage this splendid system.

The system of advertising for tenders is fraught with much mischief, because it enables the class of which I have spoken to be in a position to compete where otherwise they would entirely be shut out: much trouble and perplexity to architects naturally arise from having to do with such characters, and respectable men cannot or will not submit tenders very frequently when this is the case. It is sad to read, as we do, in your journal, week after week, the great discrepancy between tenders. Notwithstanding the advantage in some respects, it is a pity, in another, these amounts should be furnished; not because it exposes those men whose tenders are so ridiculous in amount, but because *THE BUILDER* is a journal which lies not only on the counting-house desk, but also on the table of the drawing-room and parlour, and consequently the discerning

public behold these amounts, and exclaim, "mystery of mysteries, who can fathom the building trade! We must leave off our old ways of giving our work to Mr. A. or Mr. B., who has done it for years, and we must call for tenders by advertisement, for behold what we are likely to be gainers thereby!" These people, however, know not what is behind the scenes: what cheating in quantity of material, beating down trade, and every unfair and artful thing that can be thought of which is resorted to. They forget if they are in trade themselves that the *ignis fatuus* that allures them will generally allure others who deal with them, and that the sting of competition, if it has not reached them, will be quickly with them. If they do not by chance personally suffer, their children surely will. What are they the gainers provided they save a 20*l*. note by crushing those they employ, if they shortly in trade lose a 100*l*. when five or six others crush them? The genuine and the only honest system of trade is "to live and let live," and if this be not done, rottenness and corruption of trade must follow.

Of the system of furnishing quantities, I, with some architects, disapprove; not that I doubt its convenience; not that I could dispute that convenience when selfishness was in the scale; but I object to it on this ground: when such is done, A. and B. and Z. the tinker and the tailor, all, without much trouble, can throw in a tender; but tell these gentlemen no quantities are furnished, they must take their own: they pull a wry face, feel their pockets, and exclaim, "We must give it up; we cannot raise 5*l*. or 10*l*. to pay a surveyor (a respectable and useful class of men) to take out the same; and to do it ourselves, we know not how or where to begin." Then comes the chance for the few respectable men; then it is there is a chance of something near the mark,—the numbers are limited.

WALTER.

#### CHAPEL FOR THE CONSUMPTION HOSPITAL, BROMPTON.

This building, founded by the Rev. Sir Henry Foulis, Bart., who laid the first stone under the east window on the 30th August, 1849,\* is specially intended for the use of the patients of the hospital, and was erected in memory of a near and dear relative.

The chapel consists of a nave, 60 feet long and 23 feet wide; north and south transeptal projections, 17 feet wide and 10 feet deep; and chancel, 23 feet long within the arch, and 18 feet wide. The extreme length from east to west is 84 feet. The height internally in the nave is 15 feet to the hammer beam, and 35 feet to the top of the ridge. The interior fittings of the nave are divided into classes, the two first rows of seats eastward being appropriated to the committee of management and officers of the institution. The next seats are for patients in a very weak condition, and requiring the greatest degree of ease; these sittings are therefore separated by arms; the seats are wide, and in other respects large. The next sittings are still wider, and the backs far apart, but without arms: the last seats, up to the west wall, are of the ordinary dimensions of the open seats in churches for those patients who may be recovering, and who may shortly leave the institution. The whole of the interior fittings are of oak, some bearing the arms and crest of the founder: these, happening to form most appropriate decorations, have been freely used in the interior as well as exterior of the building; they are heraldically—"Arg. three bay-leaves proper; crest, a crescent arg. surmounted by a cross sa.;" the motto is—"Je ne change qu'en mourant." The crest has been most frequently used on account of its being applicable to the building—"Christianity overcoming Paganism." The floor under the seats is boarded and made level with the gangways, in order that there shall be no difficulty in reaching the seats by the weak patients. All the other parts of the nave are paved with terra-metallic tiles, red and black: in one portion, between the pulpit and reading desk, the arms, crest, and motto of the founder are laid with Minton's tiles. In the north recess an organ will be placed, the pipes to be

\* The building was consecrated on the 27th June last, by the Bishop of London.